



366th AEW accomplishes 'firsts' while in Bahrain

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B-1B Lancers, similar to this one, bedded down for the first time with the 366th Air Expeditionary Wing from Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, at a deployed location. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Lem Robson)

*by Senior Airman Scott T. Sturkol
366th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs*

SHAIKH ISA AIR BASE, Bahrain (AFNS) -- The 366th Air Expeditionary Wing, nicknamed the Gunfighters, [Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho](#), recently accomplished a series of firsts while deployed to Bahrain in support of Operation Southern Watch.

It was the first time an Operational Readiness Inspection was completed in theater during a real-world contingency; the first time bombers, fighters and tankers from the same wing deployed to a location in support of a contingency; and the first time the [B-1B Lancers](#) from the 34th Bomb Squadron have bedded down with the wing in a deployed location, according to the 366th Wing historian.

"It's been said that it's historic," said [Brig. Gen. Randall "Mark" Schmidt](#), 366th AEW commander. "What I think is historic is that all three of those things happened at the same time and I'm glad that it was the Gunfighters."

The chief of the [Air Combat Command](#) inspector general team said the 366th AEW did well during the ORI.

"As far as overall observations from the inspection, we've seen a strong sense of teamwork and pride, and the unit has demonstrated their ability to accomplish the mission they were sent here to do," said Col. Steve Spencer.

Conducting an ORI during a real-world contingency came as an ACC initiative to lower operational tempo in a unit, Spencer said.

"The inspector general contributes to that OPTEMPO and we're going to try to do our part to reduce that," he

said.

Spencer said the decision for this style of an ORI also shortened the inspector's time to plan.

"Typically for an ORI preparation we begin about six months out," Spencer said. "We started the concept of the ORI with this deployment 45 days out from the deployment date.

"The original plan was for an initial response phase one ORI, which included being completed in theatre with the arrival, beddown, force protection, re-generation of the deploying aircraft, and an observation for about a week to 10 days to see how we could do future phase two ORIs in theatre."

In between the first and second phases of the ORI, the IG built in five training days to prepare the unit for the phase two portion. Spencer said the IG team of 24 people worked in a three-fold mission -- to educate, motivate, and independently evaluate.

"Hopefully what the wing saw by us doing that was command experts helping them with their internal training," Spencer said. "Typically we evaluate a wing in a scenario where they've already been in place for 30 days, which is simulated.

"In order for us to accelerate to that point, we really focused on education," said Spencer, "and by using the wing training plan we utilized the expertise on the team to assist the wing to get to the high state of readiness they demonstrated during the exercise."

Since the ORI put an added stress on many Gunfighters who deployed to Bahrain, Schmidt said it was a good identifier as to what people would really face in a combat zone.

"A lot of folks didn't understand why we had to do ATSO (Ability to Survive and Operate), but it equates to practice bleeding," Schmidt said. "Operating and surviving are two distinct things. We have to be able to do both." (Courtesy of ACC News Service)





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by Senior Airman Scott T. Sturkol
366th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

SHAIKH ISA AIR BASE, Bahrain - The 366th Air Expeditionary Wing Gunfighters from Mountain Home AFB, Idaho, recently accomplished a series of firsts while deployed to Bahrain in support of Operation Southern Watch.

It was the first time an Operational Readiness Inspection was completed in theater during a real-world contingency; the first time bombers, fighters and tankers, from the same wing deployed to a location in support of a contingency; and the first time the B-1B Lancers from the 34th Bomb Squadron have bedded down with the wing in a deployed location, according to the 366th Wing historian.

"It's been said that it's historic," said Brig. Gen. Mark Schmidt, 366th AEW commander. "What I think is historic is that all three of those things happened at the same time and I'm glad that it was the Gunfighters." The chief of the Air Combat Command inspector general team said the 366th AEW did well during the ORI.

"As far as overall observations from the inspection, we've seen a strong sense of teamwork, pride and the unit has demonstrated their ability to accomplish the mission they were sent here to do," said Col. Steve Spencer. "We wouldn't be worth our salt if we didn't find some areas for improvement, but we highlighted many, many strengths throughout the wing and throughout the subordinate units."

Conducting an ORI during a real world contingency came as an ACC initiative to lower operational tempo in a unit, Spencer said. "The inspector general contributes to that OPTEMPO and we're going to try to do our part to reduce that," he said.

Spencer said the decision for this style of an ORI also shortened the inspector's time to plan. "Typically for an ORI preparation we begin about six months out," Spencer said. "We started the concept of the ORI with this deployment 45 days out from the deployment date," the IG team chief said.

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In between the phase one and phase two portions of the ORI, the IG built in five training days to prepare the unit for the phase two portion. Spencer said the IG team of 24 people worked in a three-fold mission - to educate, motivate, and independently evaluate.

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Air Combat Command Public Affairs, United States Air Force, [ACC/PAI](#)



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B-1 bomber demonstrates global power projection in SWA

by Tech. Sgt. Eric L. Robinson

4406th Operations Group (Provisional) Public Affairs

UDAIRI RANGE, Kuwait - Two B-1B bombers from the 366th Wing, Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, operating out of Bahrain as part of the Air Expeditionary Force conducted live bombing missions here Oct. 9 and Oct. 11.

The purpose of the missions was to demonstrate the Global Power projection capabilities of the B-1, and to reaffirm the capability of the United States to project power rapidly, precisely, and globally, according to 9th Air Force officials.

Members of the provisional 4406th Operations Group's 4404th Air Support Operations Squadron coordinated the bombing runs via radio with B-1 pilots to ensure the safety and success of the mission. Each B-1 bomber dropped seven Mark-82 bombs Oct. 9 and 14 Mark-82 bombs Oct. 11. The Mark-82 is a 500 pound conventional bomb and the B-1 can carry up to 84 of them.

Teamwork between ASOS members and the B-1 crews was essential to the success of the mission, according to Maj. Gary F. Piper, 4404th ASOS commander. Piper's unit controls the Udairi range and the unit's forward air controllers coordinate close air support and fratricide avoidance for a host of military units.

"The mission was a success," said Staff Sgt. John Barney, a 4404th ASOS terminal attack controller aligned with the U. S. Army's Intrinsic Action Task Force 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry. "The B-1s hit the target we wanted them to hit. Safety is always a factor in our mind when we're air controlling, especially when we're doing live bomb drops."

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